

Campaign launched to target pollution-related crime

North China's Hebei Province has launched a six-month campaign targeting pollution-related crime in order to improve the environment during the coming winter, according to the provincial public security department.

The campaign will run from Oct. 1 to March 31 and targets crime such as illegal disposal of dangerous waste, small polluting factories and fabrication of monitoring data by companies with emissions.

Illegal disposal of dangerous waste is the most common environmental crime, accounting for more than 70 percent of environment-related criminal cases in the province, according to Hebei Public Security Department.

Inspections will be carried out by the provincial public security and environmental protection departments as well as provincial higher people's court and procuratorate.

Hebei police have handled 719 pollution-related criminal cases and arrested 1,287 suspects so far this year.

By the end of September, more than 11,000 people had been punished this year for poor implementation of measures controlling air pollution, including 220 leading officials, according to the provincial environmental protection department.

According to a work plan issued in August, the head or Party chief of a county will be held responsible if the county lags behind in terms of air quality improvement.

"We have a zero tolerance policy towards manipulating monitoring data," said Li Zhengfang with the department. The Party chief will be held responsible if three cases of monitoring data fabrication are reported in the county, Li said.

The province, home to several of China's top 10 most polluted cities, set up an environmental police squad in 2013 and later an environmental protection courtroom within the provincial higher people's court.